

# Athabasca University



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# **Athabasca University 1970 - 1995**

by Eileen Hendy

Athabasca University 

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# Acknowledgements

I would like to give special thanks to all the people who have contributed to the production of this book.

- Athabasca University 25th Anniversary Committee members for their encouragement and support.
- Christine Nelson for her encouragement, advice and support.
- Judith Van Duren for her assistance with selecting illustrations and photographs, and for her moral support, encouragement and advice.
- Carol Schafer, whose editing skills and suggestions were much valued and have greatly enhanced this book.
- Media Services Department, Director and staff for all their advice and technical support.

The idea for the book was born in the Spring of 1995 and the first draft was ready by the beginning of September 1995.

This book provides only a brief glimpse into Athabasca University's rich and splendid history. For those of you interested in exploring AU's history further, two bookson AU's early history have been written (first two listings on the bibliography list). Also, the Thomas A. Edge Archives houses one of the finest and most complete insitutional archival collections, and is available for research purposes.

My final thanks are to all the past and present students, staff and governing bodies for making it possible for this institution to celebrate its 25th anniversary.

Happy 25th anniversary Athabasca University.

Eileen Hendy  
October, 1995



## *Dedication*

*This book is dedicated to the students, staff and  
Governing Board who have participated in shaping  
Athabasca University over the past 25 years.*

**D**URING THE LATE 1960s, enrolments at Alberta's universities increased rapidly, and the Alberta Government became convinced of the need for a new university.

Athabasca University was established on June 25, 1970, by the Government of Alberta with Order in Council 1206/70. The Order in Council named the university, established its location, set its curriculum and instructional objectives, and appointed an Interim Governing Authority.

## Chapter One: 1970 to 1972

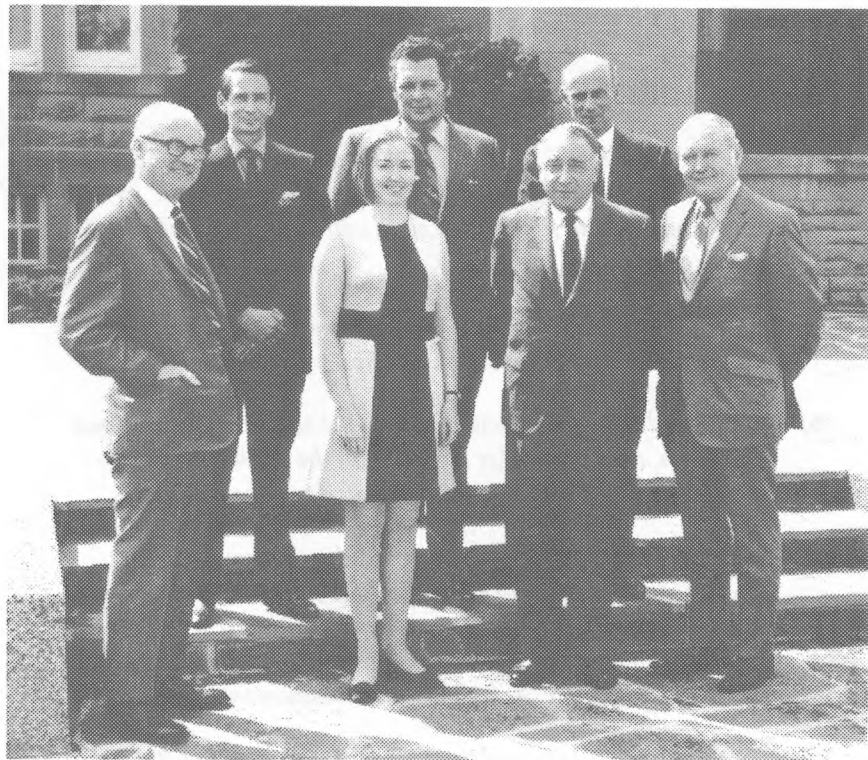
*Upon the recommendation of the Honourable the Minister of Education, dated June 25, 1970, the Executive Council advises, pursuant to section 3, subsections (2) to (4) inclusive, of The Universities Act:*

- 1. That a university shall be established, solely on a site to be provided by the Alberta Government three miles North East of the Town of St. Albert, the name of which shall be the ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY.*
- 2. That while ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY will be a full member of the provincial university system under The Universities Act, its curriculum and instructional objectives will be subject to the following conditions:*
  - a) The primary mission of the university will be the development of excellence in undergraduate studies.*
  - b) Undergraduate studies will be limited to the arts, sciences, and education, with particular attention to the application of the humanities and social sciences in related professional fields.*
  - c) The development of a program of graduate studies is not expected to take place in the immediate future. Development of such a program will be contingent upon the approval of the Alberta Universities Commission and the amendment of this Order in Council by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.*
  - d) The university is expected to explore and to institute, if deemed desirable, new procedures in curriculum organization and instruction.*



3. That an INTERIM GOVERNING AUTHORITY be and is hereby appointed to undertake the planning of the university and such other actions as are deemed essential to make the university operative, with membership of this Authority to consist of the following:

*The Honourable Mr. Justice Carlton W. Clement, Chairman  
(Mrs.) Marilyn Pilkington Shaw, Calgary  
Richard S. Fowler, St. Albert  
Dr. T.C. Byrne, Edmonton  
Ronald Clarke, Edmonton  
Dr. A. Marino Kristjanson, Edmonton  
Rev. Edward M. Checkland, Edmonton  
Dr. S. Gordon Geldart, Edmonton*



*Athabasca University's first Interim Governing Authority at  
Government House, 1970  
Photo courtesy Provincial Archives of Alberta*

The first meeting of the Interim Governing Authority of Athabasca University took place on July 2 and 3, 1970, at Government House in Edmonton. Discussion at this meeting was general in nature and related to instructional methods, aims of curriculum, a master plan for the university, staffing, office space, bank account, legal counsel, and

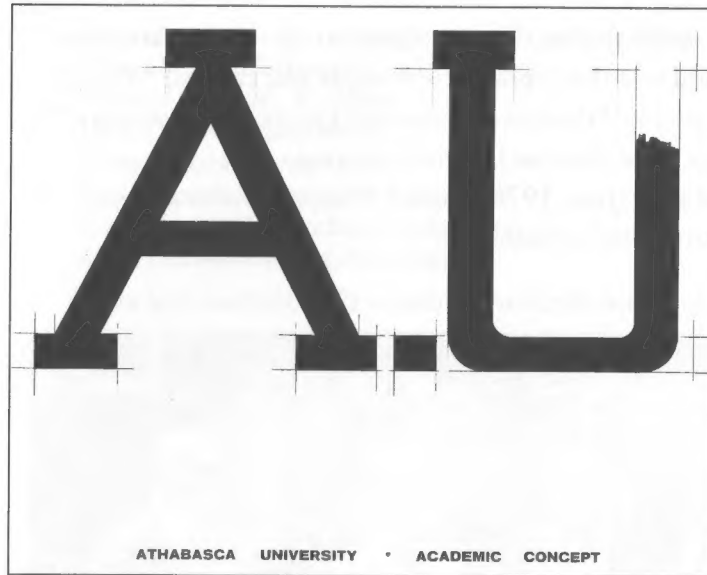


committees. The first motion made and carried was: “That Mr. Clement and Mr. Clarke study the question of obtaining office space, with power to lease.” The second motion made and carried was: “That Mr. Fowler and Dr. Geldart investigate the matter of a bank account and report back to the authority with a recommendation.” Members of the Interim Governing Authority felt that the name Interim Governing Authority was awkward, and so a third motion was made and carried: “That the Board be designated as Athabasca University Governing Authority.” In all, seven motions were made at this first meeting.

During its first year (June 1970 – June 1971), the major activities of the Governing Authority consisted of:

- leasing office space on the fourth floor of the IBM building at 10808 – 99th Avenue in Edmonton
- appointing the Toronto Dominion Bank as banker
- holding thirteen regular meetings and four special meetings
- establishing the following committees:
  - Executive Committee
  - Building Committee
  - Academic Planning Committee
  - Liaison Committee
  - Finance Committee
  - Library Committee
- engaging its first full-time employee, Ingrid Miller, Stenographer-Receptionist (July 1970); its second full-time employee, J. Arthur Webb, Capital Resources Officer (October 1970); and its third permanent appointment, Laurie J. Hughes, Executive Secretary to the Governing Authority (November 1970).
- obtaining the St. Albert site as specified by The Order in Council creating Athabasca University. The site contained several buildings and was maintained by the Government of Canada. Ownership of the site was transferred to the Provincial Government and then to Athabasca University. Upon this transfer, the Governing Authority hired its fourth employee, Mr. Joe Hunter, on February 1, 1971, to provide security and care for the grounds and buildings.

- conducting visits to those universities in North America and England that were recognized as using innovative procedures in undergraduate education. In April 1971, the Governing Authority published "Athabasca University: Academic Concept."



- establishing a Presidential Selection Committee and, on May 1, 1971, appointing T.C. Byrne as President.



*Dr. T. C. Byrne*

- President Byrne secured appointment of two additional staff members: Lynne Booth, Secretary to the President, and Larry Ferguson, Assistant to the President, on June 1, 1971.
- June 1971, Governing Authority approved the engagement of Stanton Leggett and Associates of Chicago as academic planner.

As of June 1, 1971, the total number of full-time staff had reached seven. Of these, four members were classified as “academic,” and three were classified as “non-academic.” The term of the Interim Governing Authority members under Order of Council 1206/70 soon expired.

On July 8, 1971, Order in Council 1208/71 was approved, appointing another Interim Governing Authority. The members appointed were:

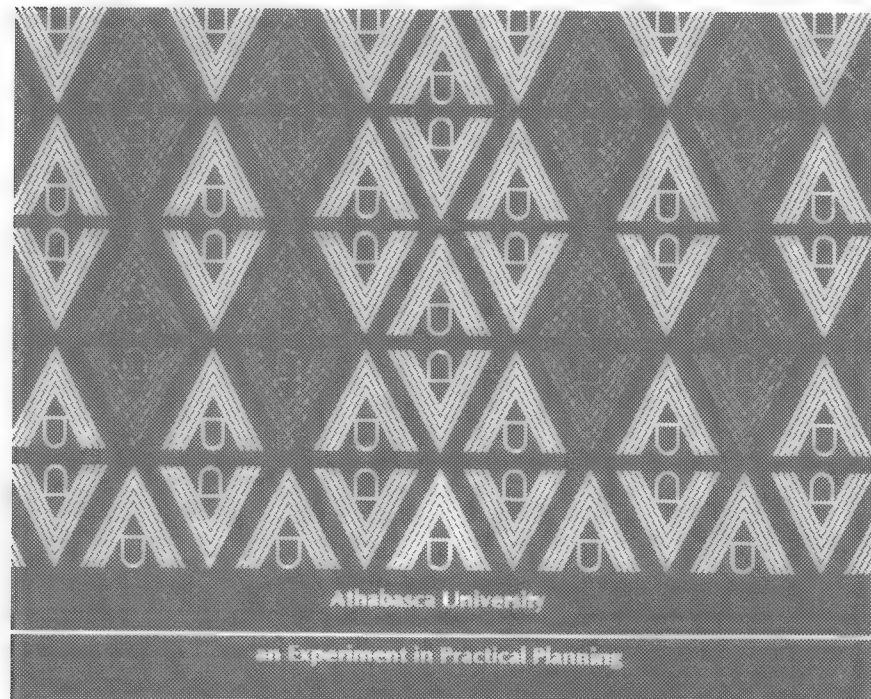
*Merrill E. Wolfe, Edmonton, Chairman*  
*Dr. S. Gordon Geldart, Edmonton, Vice-Chairman*  
*Reverend Edward M. Checkland, Edmonton*  
*Ronald Clarke, Edmonton*  
*Richard S. Fowler, St. Albert*  
*Lois Hole, St. Albert*  
*Dr. A. Marino Kristjanson, Edmonton*  
*James Langevin, St. Albert*

A short while later, Order in Council 1456/71 added *Anne Marie Decore* of Edmonton as a member of the Governing Authority.

Academic and physical planning for Athabasca University continued throughout 1971. By the end of August of that year, Athabasca University had a well-developed academic plan and was well on its way to formulating a facilities plan. Earlier that year, during May and June, Governing Authority had approved the engagement of a construction management firm, engineers, and architects, and the Athabasca University Design Consortium was formed.

A provincial election on August 30, 1971, saw the Conservatives replace the Social Credits as the governing party of Alberta. However, Athabasca University was a Social Credit project and its future with the new government was uncertain. For the remainder of 1971 and all of 1972, the governing authority continued and completed its academic and physical planning for Athabasca University under a cloud of uncertainty. The Governing Authority, the President, and the University staff campaigned strongly for the opportunity to put into action what they believed Athabasca University could offer Albertans seeking a university education. The Design Consortium presented its conceptual design to Governing Authority on December 16, 1971, and approval in

principle was given on January 20, 1972. On May 30, 1972, the Minister of Advanced Education read a policy statement on Athabasca University in the Alberta Legislature. As enrolment trends at Alberta's universities appeared to be declining, building plans for a new university would not proceed, meaning that physical planning was to be suspended on the St. Albert site. However, the policy statement approved a proposal of the Athabasca University Governing Authority that academic planning continue and a pilot project be undertaken that would test the Athabasca University model. This statement became Athabasca University's new mandate.



In October 1972, Athabasca University published the document "Athabasca University, An Experiment in Practical Planning," which set out how the research project was to be structured, operated, and tested. Funding was approved for a three-to-five-year pilot project which was to demonstrate that university courses could be developed and delivered to students for home-study, and to determine whether Albertans were sufficiently interested in this form of education.

In September 1972, Athabasca University vacated its offices at the IBM building and moved to the former offices of the Northland School Division at 14515 – 122 Avenue in Edmonton.

December 1972 saw a number of significant developments occur. The Department of Advanced Education and the Governing Authority of Athabasca University agreed on an academic plan. Governing Authority then commenced its search for academic and professional staff. The University reached an agreement with *The Edmonton Journal* to publish a university-level course on ecology.

# newspaper university

**Begins in The Journal Saturday, Oct. 6th**

## **“World Ecology: The Scientific Context”**

is the title of this exciting new self-study program offered by Athabasca University and the Edmonton Journal with the support and endorsement of Alberta's Department of Advanced Education

### **Who Can Take The Course?**

Athabasca University offers a university education to anyone who feels ready for it. Full academic courses offering university credit are available in this new self-study pilot program designed for Albertans who want to learn without the complications of classroom attendance or living on campus. You can study at home at your own pace and convenience.

The Edmonton Journal will introduce this new program as a public service to Albertans. For the first time in Canada, a major newspaper is co-operating with a university to make advanced education available to its readers.

From this pilot program Athabasca University and The Journal expect to learn the best ways to provide more such study programs for Albertans in the future.

### **Learning by Newspaper**

Twelve articles on World Ecology prepared by Athabasca University will be published in The Journal every Saturday beginning October 6. These articles will introduce the subjects of the course to Journal readers. Though university credit cannot be given for reading the articles, Athabasca University will provide an examination based upon them for those readers who wish to receive recognition for their study. Journal readers who do not wish to enroll in the course may learn much about the vitally important science of ecology by reading these articles.

### **Course details**

The first learning Series in this new program is called “World Ecology — The Scientific Context.” It will serve as an introduction to the structures and processes of the natural environment. During the course, the relationships among living things will be studied in a scientific manner under the direction of Dr. T.S. Bakshi, Senior Tutor in Environmental Sciences at Athabasca University. Dr. Bakshi's course will explain the essentials of ecological science in order to prepare each student for an informed and intelligent understanding of the significant environmental problems facing the modern world.

### **How Fast Must You Study?**

Athabasca students may progress in learning at whatever speed they choose. Completion of each portion of a Learning Series will be determined by the student's performance on a mastery test covering the information studied in that unit. When a subject has been mastered, the student will move on to new work until the entire course of study has been completed.

### **How To Take The Course**

Readers wishing to study the subjects discussed in these articles in greater depth may register as students at Athabasca University. Registered students will receive complete self-study packages, including thirty printed instructional booklets on World Ecology. Forty cassette tapes with explanatory discussions by experts in the field are also included. The booklets and tapes will guide each student toward mastery of the subject through study questions and practice exercises. Students must supply their own cassette players.

Tutorial group sessions will be scheduled for evening and weekend periods so that registered students may ask questions, receive guidance and further explore any topics of special interest or importance.

### **Limited Enrolment**

The University will accept one hundred students immediately on a “first come, first served” basis. Additional applicants will be accepted as soon as they can be accommodated. The Learning Series, equivalent to a full year course at other provincial universities, will carry a tuition fee of \$75.00 for all materials, examinations and scheduled consultations with tutors.

### **About Athabasca University**

Athabasca University believes that learning can occur in the minds of those who study, whether they are in a classroom or in the privacy of their own homes. The age and previous educational experience of a student matter less than his or her curiosity and willingness to learn. Athabasca University will exist wherever its students may be, and its faculty will take a personal interest in each student's progress. It is Athabasca's responsibility to bring the means of learning to its students, not to bring the students to the University.

For further information write to  
**Athabasca University**  
14515 - 122 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5L 2W4

*Edmonton Journal, Tuesday, October 2, 1973*

As of December 1, 1972, ten full-time staff were employed by Athabasca University.

It was discovered in 1972 that Order in Council 1208/71 had actually rescinded Order in Council 1206/70, the establishment of Athabasca University, making Order in Council 1206/70 void. In other words, Athabasca University did not legally exist! On December 20, 1972, the Government of Alberta passed Order in Council 1986/72, “establishing a university to be known as Athabasca University.”

*Upon the recommendations of the Honourable the Minister of Advanced Education, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, pursuant to section 4 of The Universities Act,*

- 1. establishes a university to be known as “ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY”;*
- 2. establishes an interim governing body for the Athabasca University to be known as “ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY INTERIM GOVERNING AUTHORITY”, to exist until June 30, 1974;*
- 3. appoints the following persons as members of the Athabasca University Interim Governing Authority:*
  - a) Merrill E. Wolfe, Edmonton, Chairman*
  - b) Reverend Edward Checkland, Edmonton*
  - c) Lois Hole (Mrs.), St. Albert*
  - d) Anne Marie Decore (Mrs.), Edmonton*
  - e) Patrick Delaney, Edmonton*
  - f) Dr. Brian Staples, Devon*
- 4. empowers and authorizes the Athabasca University Interim Governing Authority to undertake a pilot project for the production, testing and application of learning systems to provide study programs in the arts and sciences leading to an undergraduate degree, and for the application of technology and new procedures to improve educational opportunities for adults generally;*
- 5. rescinds Orders in Council numbered O.C. 1206/70, O.C. 1208/71, O.C. 1281/71 and O.C. 1456/71.*

Athabasca University now had a new mandate. For some people, a “first Athabasca University,” existed from June 25, 1970, to December 19, 1972, with a “second Athabasca University” coming into existence with the Order of Council on December 20, 1972.

THE UNIVERSITY lost little time in hiring staff and setting the wheels in motion for the pilot project as directed by Order in Council 1986/72 on December 20, 1972. By March 31, 1974, the number of full-time staff at Athabasca University had reached nineteen. During this year, staff undertook the development of the University's first course, *World Ecology: The Scientific Context*. This course provided a pilot study in the production, development, and delivery of self-instructional materials for home-based study.

## Chapter Two: *Pilot Period— December 1972 to December 1975*

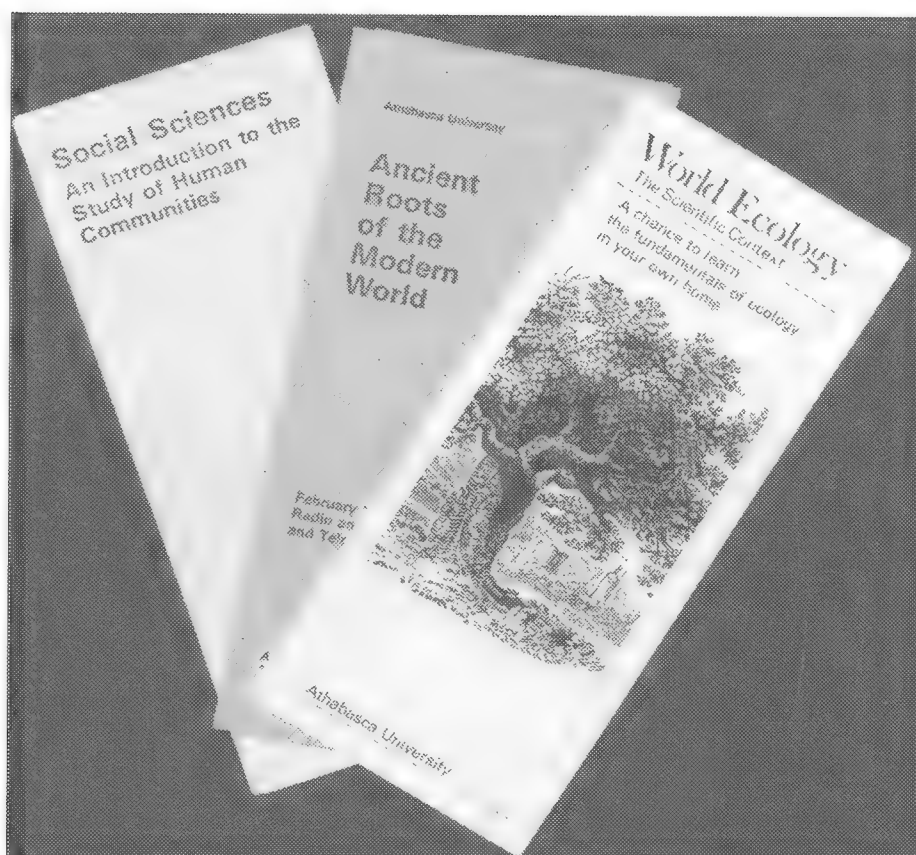


*Some of AU's first staff members, 1974*

By October, the first two units of *World Ecology* were completed and the University advertised for students who would be willing to participate in course development. One hundred and sixty students were selected for the project.

A major task faced during the 1973-74 year was the development of an efficient production system, from authorship to printing. Three courses were developed during this time: one in ecology, *World Ecology: The Scientific Context*; one in the humanities, *Ancient Roots of the Modern World*; and one in the social sciences, *Introduction to the Study of Human Communities*.





All three courses were developed and tested during the pilot period. By 1975 the pilot project had produced a model for developing and delivering self-instructed university courses. The basic components of these courses comprised a package of print and non-print materials, supported by telephone tutorial services.

During January and February 1975, a study of the model was completed by Downey and Associates, and on March 24, 1975, the report, "Athabasca University Pilot Project: Report of an Assessment" was presented to the Alberta Government.

Athabasca University's Academic Council was established in 1974. The minutes of the December 12, 1974, Governing Authority meeting recorded the following two motions:

*That an Interim Academic Council be established with the responsibility and the authority to decide on all matters having to do with the educational program of the university, and that it be clearly understood that this council cannot commit the university to any expenditures of funds.*

*That the membership of the Interim Academic Council shall be the president, who shall be the chairman, two members from the governing*

*authority selected by the governing authority, and six members from the permanent staff selected by the permanent staff.*

During its first year, the Interim Academic Council developed a curriculum design for the selection and production of courses leading to a baccalaureate degree. The Council's long-range goal was for the University to offer at least four distinct undergraduate programs terminating with a degree in arts.

As of March 31, 1975, the total number of staff was 36. Of that number, 21 were professional staff and 15 were support staff.

On November 3, 1975, the Reverend Edward Checkland, Acting Chairman of the Interim Governing Authority, received a letter from the Honourable Advanced Education Minister, Dr. Hohol, informing the Governing Authority that the Cabinet had approved in principle the permanency of Athabasca University.



**T**HE ANNUAL REPORT for April 1, 1975, to March 31, 1976, stated "... The central and major purpose of Athabasca University is to provide ready access to an increasing number of Canadians—irrespective of educational background, age or location—to those domains of knowledge relevant to the exploration of personal and social issues of significance during the remaining years of this century." On March 31, 1976, the University had 650 single course registrations distributed among its first three courses. Residency of these students was divided equally among large, middle-sized, and smaller communities. Division between female and male students was equal. Occupations represented by these students ranged widely, but three groups predominated: school teachers, homemakers, and clerical workers.

By this time, the total number of staff had reached 52. Professional staff numbered 32, and support staff numbered 20. All staff members were directly or indirectly involved in some aspect of the system's operation, from production of learning materials to delivery systems to student services.

Dr. T.C. Byrne retired as President in 1976. Dr. W.A.S. Smith became Athabasca University's second President on October 1, 1976.

### **Chapter Three:** *November 3,* *1975 to* *April 12, 1978*



*Dr. W. A. S. Smith*

Athabasca University's achievements during 1976-77 included the following:

- offering of seventeen courses in four program areas (sciences, humanities, social sciences, and other). Fifteen of the seventeen courses were junior-level.



*World Ecology Course field trip*

- 1270 course enrolments. Ten courses were offered by packaged home-study mode and seven courses were delivered by instructors.
- offering of two degree programs: Bachelor of Arts: Liberal Studies, and Bachelor of General Studies.
- transfer arrangements for Athabasca University courses to other institutions both within and outside of Alberta.
- Athabasca University becoming affiliated with national associations of universities.
- approval of short- and long-range academic development guidelines, which formed the basis for the document, "Athabasca University: A Framework for Development." This document outlined the University's program direction and resource requirements for the period from 1978 to 1983.

- negotiations between the University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing and Athabasca University regarding a post-basic degree in nursing.

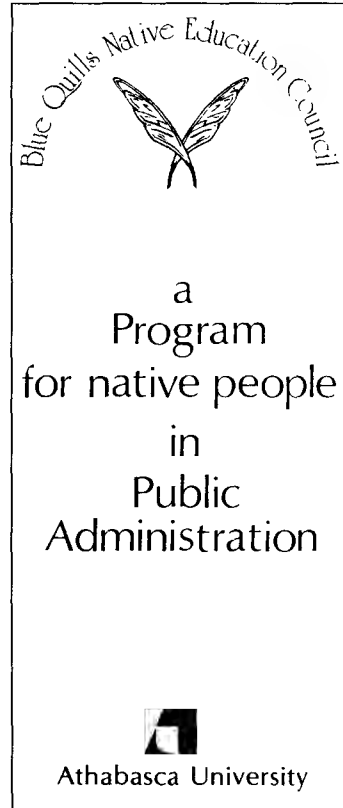


- staffing increases by ten professional positions and six support positions.



*AU Staff*

- offering of a concentration of courses designed specifically in Band Administration through cooperative arrangements to native students at Blue Quills.



- preliminary program planning relating to in-service workers in criminal justice, social work, child care, and the para-professions.

An Ad Hoc Committee on the formation of a staff association was formed in 1976. Upon their recommendation, an Interim Staff Association was established, and on December 16, 1976, the Athabasca University Staff Association elected its first executive. Election results were as follows: Don Cowper, President; Wayne Allison, Vice-President; Doug Shale, Secretary; Marlene Pain, Treasurer; Glenn Lunde, Membership Co-ordinator; Bob Robertson, Publicity Co-ordinator; Lily Oddie, Research Co-ordinator; Sue Gordichuk and Mike Gruber, Members at Large.

For the reporting period April 1, 1977, to March 31, 1978, the University had 2972 active single course enrolments. Of this number, 1816 were new course enrolments initiated during the reporting period. Twenty-eight courses were offered in four program areas, with 20 of the



28 courses being at the junior level. Transfer arrangements for almost all the 1977-78 course offerings were completed. University-determined programs in Liberal Studies were under consideration, and programs in Administrative Studies and Helping Services were being developed.

A research project in computer-managed instruction, entitled "Tutor Assisted Instructional Management" (TAIM), and a "Labour Education Needs Assessment Project" were undertaken during this reporting period.

Significant staff increases had also occurred during this period. Athabasca University now employed 49 full-time and 27 part-time professional staff, and 36 full-time and 15 part-time support staff.

On April 14, 1977, the Athabasca University Faculty Association was formed. The Interim Executive elected at this meeting were the following: Iain Taylor, President; Mary Hamilton, Vice-President; Sydney Sharpe, Secretary-Treasurer; Larry Ferguson and Gail Crawford, Members at Large, with two positions for Members at Large left vacant.

A University Accountant was appointed in June 1977 to enable the Financial Services unit to develop financial administration and budgetary control policies and procedures that are appropriate to a permanent institution.

During the 1977-78 fiscal year, Athabasca University opened its Fort McMurray Learning Centre at 9401 Franklin Avenue in Fort McMurray.

## *Athabasca University centre offers wide range of facilities*

The Athabasca University Learning Centre in Fort McMurray was officially opened yesterday in conjunction with a visit from the university president and governing council.

The learning centre is the university's most advanced centre in northeastern Alberta, Athabasca university president Sam Smith said yesterday.

"In terms of physical facilities outside Edmonton this has the most adequate space -- classroom space, video-tape players and a small library.

The centre which is located at 9597 Franklin Avenue offers 2,500 sq. ft. of space for students taking courses through the university. Athabasca University is primarily concerned with distance-education, although some lecture programs are also offered.

Dr. Smith said the education needs and growing population of the town warrant the expansion of these programs and the university is looking at the possibility of obtaining space in the proposed new Keyano College complex.

If this occurs Athabasca University could share food services and recreational facilities with the college.

"We want to work together to provide a complete degree opportunity for students in Fort McMurray," he said.

The mandate of Athabasca University is to provide students with a formal university education while enabling them to remain within their home communities and continue with their regular jobs. Most of the courses are offered in the form of home study programs with access to tutors, video-tape courses and learning resource material.

Dr. Smith said the university courses taken through this program cost about the same as a course taken at a traditional learning institution. Students also have the advantage of having virtually all of their learning materials, including textbooks, provided without additional costs.

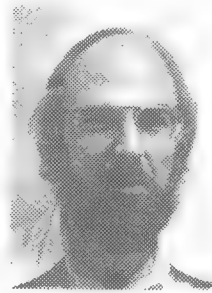
The aim of Athabasca University is to be able to provide students with a complete degree program.

"Ideally what we'll be able to do is combine classroom courses and distance delivery so people can have a real program instead of a hodge-podge of courses. We should have enough courses in place in two years so that people could complete a coherent undergraduate degree program in the liberal studies, administrative studies and helping services which provide a foundation for people going into social welfare, counselling, and others," he said.

*Fort McMurray Today, May 30, 1978*



Garland Hahn



Kevin Whittingham

## A CELEBRATION!

The University of Athabasca University  
 formally recognizes and confers  
 degrees upon the first graduates of the degrees  
 from the University and the installation of  
 W.A.S. Smith as the second President of the University

Wednesday, November 2nd, 1977

8:00 pm

Recreation Room

Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium  
 5th Avenue and 112 Street, Edmonton

R.S.V.P. October 17, 1977

Wine and cheese to follow

### First students to receive degrees! Save the date — Nov. 2/77!

All students, faculty and staff are invited to  
 come with a guest to celebrate in honour  
 of the maturation of our new President, Dr.  
 W.A.S. Smith. We will then confer degrees on

our first two graduates Kevin Whittingham  
 and Garland Hahn. We will also preview a  
 new feature of Athabasca University which  
 features several of our students and the  
 Presidents of the other Alberta universities  
 along with our new President.

By the time you receive this, you should have  
 already received your official copy of the  
 invitation. For any reason, the invitation is  
 printed elsewhere on this page. It is an  
 informal affair, so come and help us celebrate.  
 Be sure to R.S.V.P.

In November 1977, Athabasca University recognized its first graduates and formally installed Dr. W.A.S. Smith as its second President.

## An informal convocation

By Cathie Hardien

One president was installed and one student received his degree at Athabasca University's "celebration" Wednesday.

What other universities call convocation was an informal event at Jubilee Auditorium to mark somewhat belatedly the transfer of authority from first president Dr. T.C. Byrne to current president Dr. Sam Smith.

Dr. Smith began his five-year term as president of Alberta's fourth and newest university Oct. 1, 1976.

Kevin Whittingham of Edmonton, a teacher at Alberta College, received his bachelor of general studies degree in a presentation devoid of the robes, mortarboards and other trappings.

Fellow graduate Garland Maho of Medicine Hat was unable to attend.

The university which promotes itself as being different managed to start its ceremony like no other. When the procession of dignitaries, including Lt. Gov. Ralph Kleinhamer and Dr. A.E. Hobol, minister of advanced education and manpower, walked on stage, three members of the party ended up behind a screen set up for later viewing of an ACCESS film on Athabasca's new president.

Furthermore, there weren't enough chairs on stage to go around.

Amid laughter from the audience, the guests relocated themselves in the chairs reserved for them at the front of the room.

The event reflected Athabasca's unique format. The university has no campus, but serves its students from an administrative office in Edmonton and through correspondence courses and occasional gatherings.

It was Dr. Smith's second ceremony to become a university president. In 1967 he was appointed president and vice-chancellor of the University of Lethbridge, a post he held until 1971.



Marilyn Anderson pins boutonniere on Dr. Sam Smith

He said he much preferred Wednesday's installation procedure, which was minus the robing and other formal events at the Lethbridge ceremony.

But while informality is "a great way to do things," there is a certain amount of dignity associated with a university, Dr. Smith said.

"This one (ceremony) came very close to stretching one's tolerance for informality," he said with a smile.

Graduate Whittingham told the audience Athabasca's home-based program enabled him to fit studying into his work and family life.

In broadening his career and providing a base for graduate study, he said, he now is taking an external master of arts degree in humanities from California State University.

In his address, the new graduate noted Athabasca's recent concern over transferability of its courses to other universities, and said he hoped this concern could not stifle the earlier emphasis on thematic and interdisciplinary courses.

Dr. Smith said later that Athabasca has gone toward a more traditional course styling in the last year, mainly to prove that its graduates can transfer to other schools.

Once this is shown, Athabasca hopefully will be able to resume more of its earlier course format which can lead its own way in higher education.

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Edmonton Journal, November 3, 1977

Although Athabasca University had been approved in principle of permanency by the Government of Alberta in November 1975, it was not until April 12, 1978, that Order in Council 434/78 officially established Athabasca University.

*Upon the recommendation of the Honourable the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, pursuant to section 4.1 of The Universities Act, make the regulation in the attached Appendix, being the Athabasca University Regulation.*

The Athabasca University Regulation established the Athabasca University Governing Council as the governing authority of Athabasca University. Its members would consist of a chairman, the president, two vice-presidents, one student of Athabasca University, one staff member other than a member of the academic staff, five members of the academic staff and not more than twelve additional members representative of the general public. The terms of office were to be three years.

Its companion, Order in Council 435/78, appointed members to the newly established Athabasca University Governing Council for a three-year term of office.

- Public Members

*K.J. Chapman, Chairman*  
*E.M. Checkland, Vice-Chairman*  
*W.A.S. Smith, President*  
*J.W. Dodds*  
*J.P.C. Elson*  
*L. Hole*  
*P.E. Sandor*

- Ex-Officio Members

*J.S. Daniel, Vice-President, Learning Services*  
*B.L. Snowden, Vice-President, University Services*

- University Members

*D.W. Cowper*  
*M.G. Hamilton*  
*N.O. Henry*  
*L.D. Marler*  
*J.M. Richmond*  
*L.D. Ridge*

- Secretariat

*L.R. Oddie, Executive Secretary*  
*L.E. Bruhns, Recording Secretary*



The slogan “We’re number four, consider us first” on the 1977-78 *Calendar* confidently declared that Athabasca University was here to stay. This message was confirmed by President W.A.S. Smith in the 1976-77 Annual Report, “That almost too cute slogan is emblazoned on the 1977-78 Athabasca *Calendar*, and symbolizes the combination of irreverence, enthusiasm, and commitment that characterizes Athabasca University . . . I have been impressed by the manner in which the persons who are associated with Athabasca University have confirmed the wisdom of the Government in granting the University permanent status . . . We are not yet a mature institution but we are emerging. Moreover, because of our determination to remain responsive to unmet educational needs, we hope never to become static with respect to our program structures and methods of making our services available.”

Athabasca University was truly here to stay.



**I**N HIS REPORT in the 1978-79 Annual Report, President W.A.S. Smith stated, "In 1978-79 Athabasca University maintained its position as the fastest growing university in Canada." He further stated that enrolments doubled from the previous reporting year. The important developments in the fiscal year 1978-79 were the following:

- an expanded, restructured, and active Governing Council.

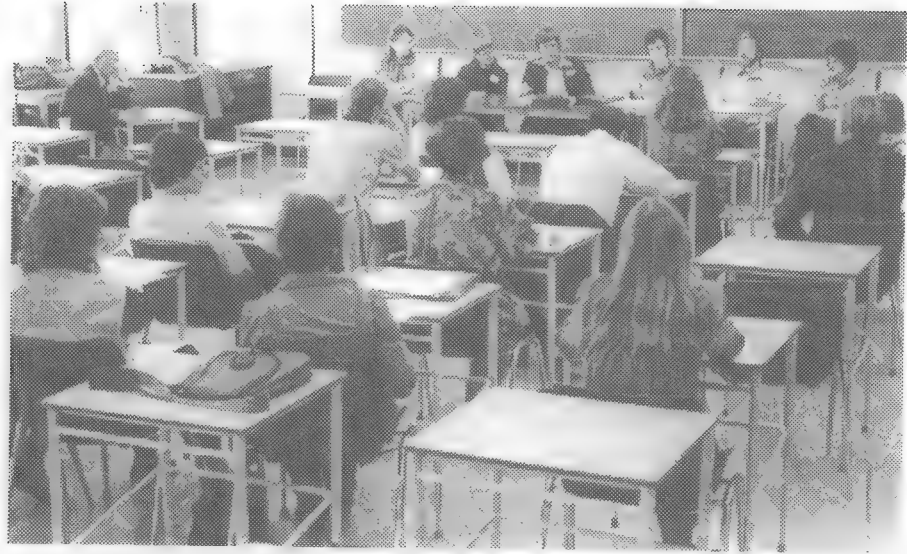


*Athabasca University Governing Council meeting*

- membership and active participation in regional and international distance education consortia, and regional and national associations of universities and colleges.
- a dramatic increase in the number of courses available in the curriculum.
- extensively increased provision of services through the system of tutors.

## Chapter Four: *1978 to 1980*





- continued development of the University's unique Student Development Services.
- progress in the establishment of the University-wide information and student records system.



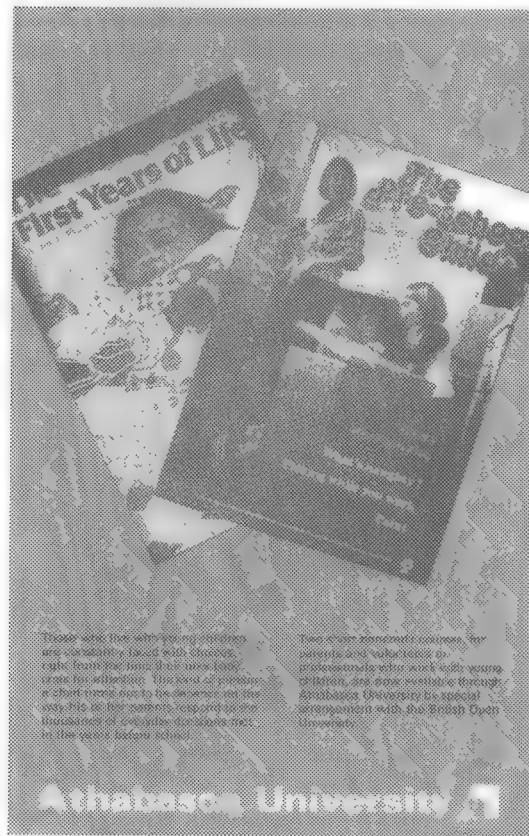
- restructuring and development of important units in University Services, including Personnel Services, General Services, Media Services, and Financial Services.
- establishment of an Institutional Studies capability that permitted the evaluation of the University's growth and its success in attaining its objectives.
- participation by the University's professional staff in creative and scholarly activities.



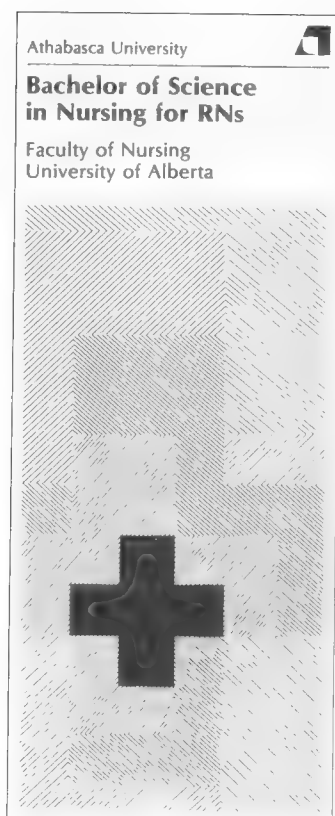
*John Daniel, Barry Snowdon, W. A. S. Smith*

The main thrust of Athabasca University's development in 1978-79 was to expand its academic offerings. In February 1979, the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower approved the University's proposal for a Bachelor of Administration program. The Liberal Studies curriculum was expanded, and it continued to offer special programs in collaboration with other institutions.

The number of courses available for independent home-study increased from 14 to 34. Three non-credit home-study courses were offered for the first time.



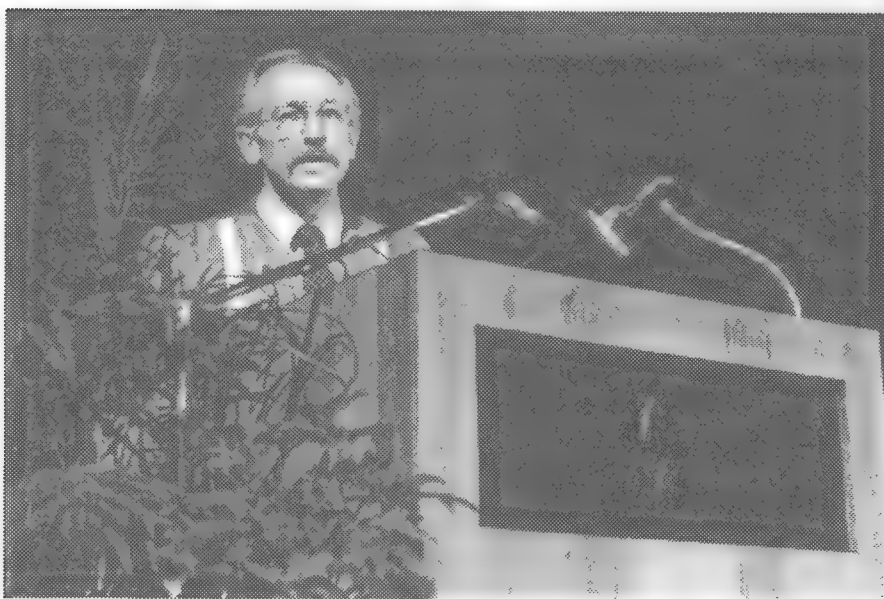
Credit articulation arrangements with the University of Alberta and University of Calgary Faculties of Nursing, and with the Faculty of Social Welfare at the University of Calgary were completed.



New single course enrolments initiated during this reporting period more than doubled—from 1816 during 1977-78 to 3731 in 1978-79. These enrolments were undertaken by 2714 students.



The University increased its television course offerings from two in the fall of 1977 to ten in the fall of 1978. In October 1978, Athabasca University launched into radio broadcasting with an introductory French language course.



Four degree programs were established during 1979-80. These were the Bachelor of Arts (Liberal Studies); the Bachelor of General Studies (Liberal Studies); the Bachelor of General Studies (Applied Studies); and the Bachelor of Administration.

Athabasca University opened its Calgary Office in September 1979. This office was staffed by a full-time regional officer.

44 THE CALGARY HERALD Tues., April 20, 1976

MAY 3 1976

## Athabasca University to expand Calgary role

By Kathy Warden  
(Herald staff writer)

Athabasca University, hailed as Alberta's new approach to higher education, will be expanding its operations to Calgary this fall.

So far the Edmonton-based campus-less university has kept a low profile, concentrating on offering its correspondence-style courses to students north of Red Deer.

But backed by a recent positive evaluation of its pilot project and a budget of \$1.74 million, Athabasca is embarking on a plan to take higher education to every community in the province.

Recruiting of southern Alberta students and tutors will begin in earnest out of offices in Calgary's Alberta Vocational Centre this fall. A full-time coordinator will be hired.

Originally planned as a full-fledged university with a \$50-million campus, Athabasca has been re-directed along the lines of the Alberta Academy recommended in the 1972 Worth Commission report on educational planning. Its focus is to provide undergraduate education to people who don't have the time, means, or inclination to attend a traditional university.

### Enrolment grows

There are now 650 students taking Athabasca courses, 60 of them in Calgary. By this fall, enrolment is expected to swell to 1,300.

"We're finding an awful lot of people who can't access the traditional type of education due to time bounds and place bounds," says Dr. Larry Ferguson, director of students services, adding that these numbers are likely to increase as more people choose to live in smaller communities.

Students now include farmers, housewives, single parents, nightshift workers, oil rig workers, policemen, doctors, and lawyers.

Some students have graduated from high school, but most haven't.

Males average 35 years of age, females 45. But Dr. Ferguson thinks 18- to 24-year-olds are going to be attracted to full-time study with Athabasca.

"I don't think you're going to see another new campus in North America. Students sitting at the foot of professors taking notes — it's all outmoded now," he said.

But he hastened to add, "This is no put-down of the traditional university. Athabasca is an alternative and I think there's room for both in this province."

The low \$120 tuition is especially attractive to rural students who would otherwise have to incur high boarding costs to attend university, he said.

As well, many people like the idea of being able to enrol at any time and progress at their own rate, provided they complete each course within a year.

Packaged self-study materials in-

clude cassette tapes, study guides, workbooks, and textbooks, supplemented in some cases by cable television programs.

Each student is assigned a tutor (with a minimum of a bachelor's degree) who can be reached by toll-free telephone.

As well, small discussion groups with students and tutors are arranged at least every two months and all-day discussion sessions are held periodically at major population centres.

### Network of centres

A network of learning centres throughout the province equipped with videotape monitors, a core of books, and lab facilities is being developed. Calgary has two such centres located in local libraries and a third is to be set up at the Alberta Vocational Centre this fall.

Dr. Ferguson concedes isolated study isn't everybody's cup of tea. "Many students are far better suited to a residential setting. To make sure they're well suited, we're developing a counselling service," he said.

To get a taste of the program, students can try a \$20 introductory package which must be completed within two months or they can't sign up for the rest of the course.

Only three courses — environmental studies, social sciences, and humanities — are offered so far, but another eight are expected to be ready this fall. Taking two or three courses a year, the first students are expected to graduate in 1978.

Dr. Ferguson is now involved in arranging transfer credit for Athabasca courses which he describes as "rigorous". In fact, the history course which requires 20 essays has been found to be too demanding for students.

Long-term plans include offering degrees in such areas as business administration, social work, and possibly education.

### More courses planned

Roughly 15 courses will be added each year, either through purchase, adaptation, or development by instructional teams.

The university has only a dozen full-time faculty. Plans are to draw on faculty from other institutions to develop curriculum.

Dr. Ferguson hopes that retired professors can be interested in serving as tutors, though he admits the flat \$5 monthly per student fee might have to be raised to attract them.

Athabasca is expected to be less costly to run than present universities, once its start-up costs are absorbed. That point is expected once enrolment passes about the 1,200 mark.

Officials are now looking at a material exchange system with similar projects in other provinces which would reduce costs even further.



In December 1978, the Innovative Projects Fund of Advanced Education and Manpower approved a project at Athabasca University to investigate strategies for increasing the motivation of the adult learner in distance education. This project, REDEAL (Research and Evaluation of Distance Education for the Adult Learner) officially began in January 1979, and was to be completed by October 1980.

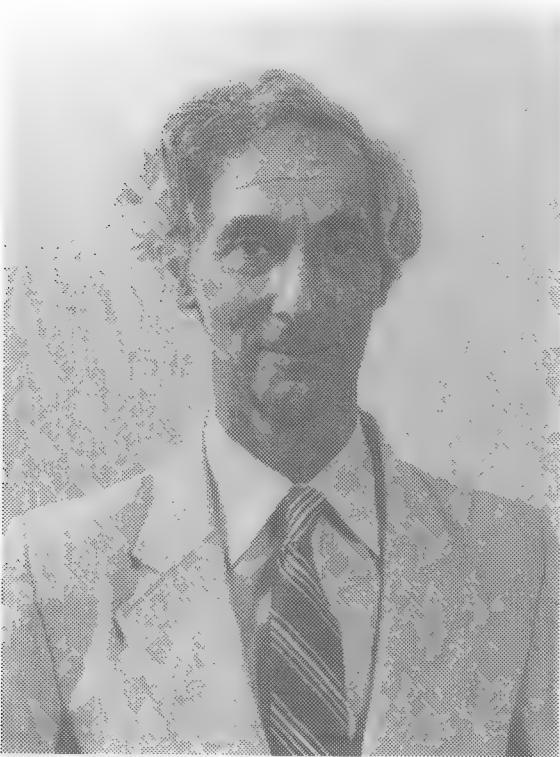


*REDEAL Team*



**I**N MARCH 1980, the provincial government announced that Athabasca University was to be relocated to the Town of Athabasca. . .

In the 1980-81 Annual Report, President Stephen Griew stated, “the most significant events of the year were a result of the government’s decision at the end of the preceding year to provide a permanent home for the University in the Town of Athabasca . . . This decision led to a great deal of anxiety and anger on the part of the University staff, and to the resignation of Dr. W.A.S. Smith, my predecessor.” Dr. Stephen Griew arrived as President on a full-time basis on January 1, 1981.



*Dr. Stephen Griew*

Governing Council had established The Commission on Relocation Planning shortly after the government’s announcement. The Commission delivered its report on the implications of the move for the University’s operation in December 1980. At its meeting on January 26, 1981, Governing Council resolved to reaffirm its earlier acceptance of the decision to relocate the University permanently to the Town of Athabasca.

## **Chapter Five:** *1980 to 1985*

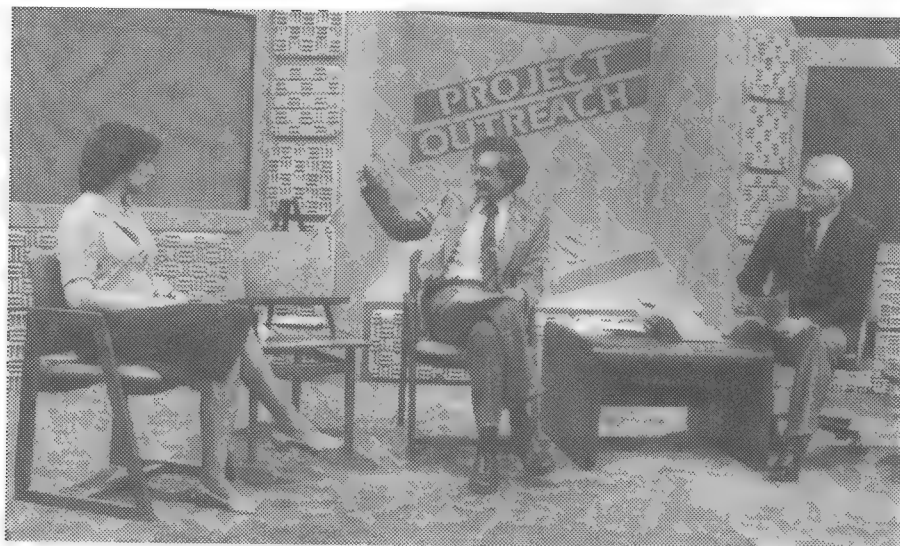
Dr. John S. Daniel, Vice-President, Learning Services, left the University in April 1980. Dr. Ross H. Paul assumed the position in November 1980. Also at this time, the first Director of Applied Studies, Dr. Dwight R. Thomas, assumed office.



*Eleanor Grandjam, 1980, AU's first native graduate*

The 1981-82 Annual Report highlighted the following:

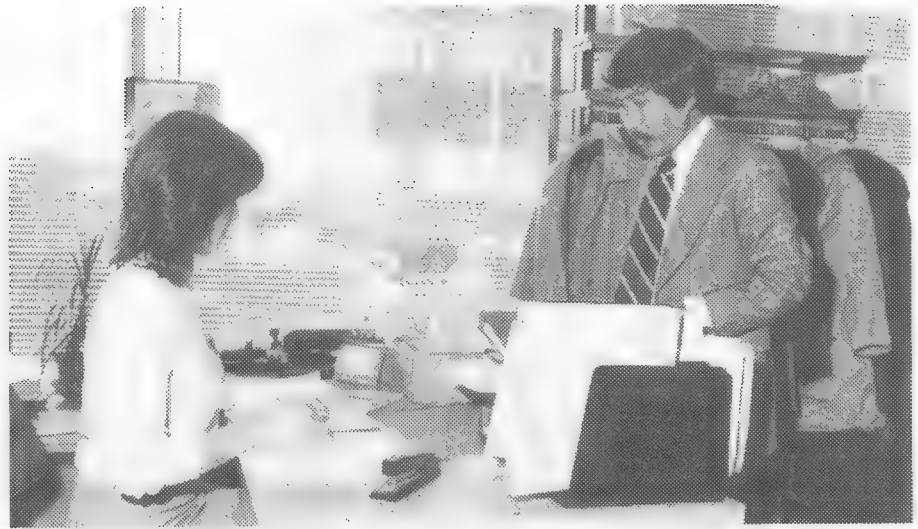
*The academic activities of Athabasca University continue to prosper. Enrolments once again increased in accordance with our projections, and course development activity accelerated markedly. At year's end, nearly 20 per cent more courses were available to our students than were available at the end of the previous year, and a course development program, which was calculated to increase available courses by an even greater factor by the end of the 1982/83 year, was on schedule.*



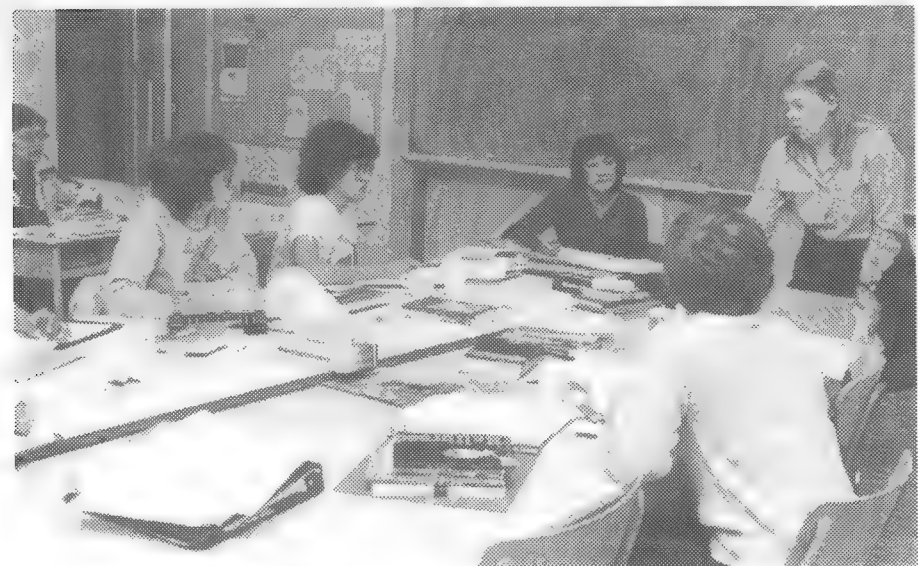
*The year saw a substantial expansion of the university's regional service network.*



*The cadre of tutors was greatly increased, and the regional offices in Calgary and Fort McMurray were significantly upgraded.*



*With a view to fostering greater and more effective collaboration between the university and the colleges, arrangements with Grande Prairie Regional College and with Medicine Hat College to second members of staff of these colleges to Athabasca University was also completed. Plans for the further expansion and refinement of a regional service system were also prepared for implementation in 1982/83.*



*Of particular significance, 1981/82 saw the admission of Athabasca University as a full member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. This recognition of the university by its peers in the Canadian university community was a source of great pleasure, and happily and*

*properly reflects its emergence as an institution that is committed to offering to its student body educational services that measure up to the demanding standards espoused by all Canadian universities.*



*At the university's convocation in June 1981, fourteen degrees were awarded to students completing programs of study.*





The 1982-83 Annual Report highlighted the following achievements:

*1982/83 was another strong growth year for Athabasca University, and there was sustained pressure on course development to respond to student needs for more advanced courses and concentration programs . . . Liberal Studies: A new concentration in Canadian Studies was approved by Academic Council, and details of the previously approved labour studies program were developed. Course development activities progressed on 24 newly initiated course projects, in addition to the 13 carried over from 1981/82. Fourteen course projects were completed or adapted during the year . . . Administrative Studies: Course development continued at a rate necessary to achieve the completion of all courses required for the Bachelor of Administration degree program by the fall of 1984. Academic council approved the proposal initiated by Administrative Studies of interim qualifications (certificates/diplomas) . . . Development of an industrial program was initiated during the year, and co-operative arrangements for specific programs were pursued with the Solicitor General of Alberta, the Institute of Canadian Bankers and the Canadian Bankers Association, and the National University Consortium in the United States. Twenty-three courses were under active development during the year, eight of which were completed in 1982/83.*







Under the section on Facilities Planning, this Annual Report states:  
 “Planning and preparation for relocation and for the development of the Athabasca campus were major activities for a number of staff, particularly in the Office of the Vice-President, Finance and Facilities. The Governing Council accepted the conceptual design for the initial Athabasca building as prepared by Wayne H. Wright Architects Ltd., and Premier Peter Lougheed officiated at the sod-turning ceremony on August 30, 1982.”

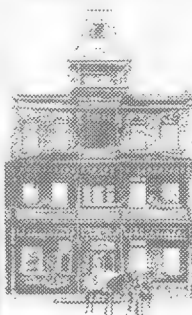




During 1983-84, course registrations totalled 9896. By March 31, 1984, the number of courses available to students had climbed to 138. During this year, further experimentation with teleconferencing was completed. A program offering educational opportunities to inmates in Canada's penitentiaries was also launched.

[illegible]

# outside Edmonton area  
call toll-free Zenith  
22273 (Athabasca)



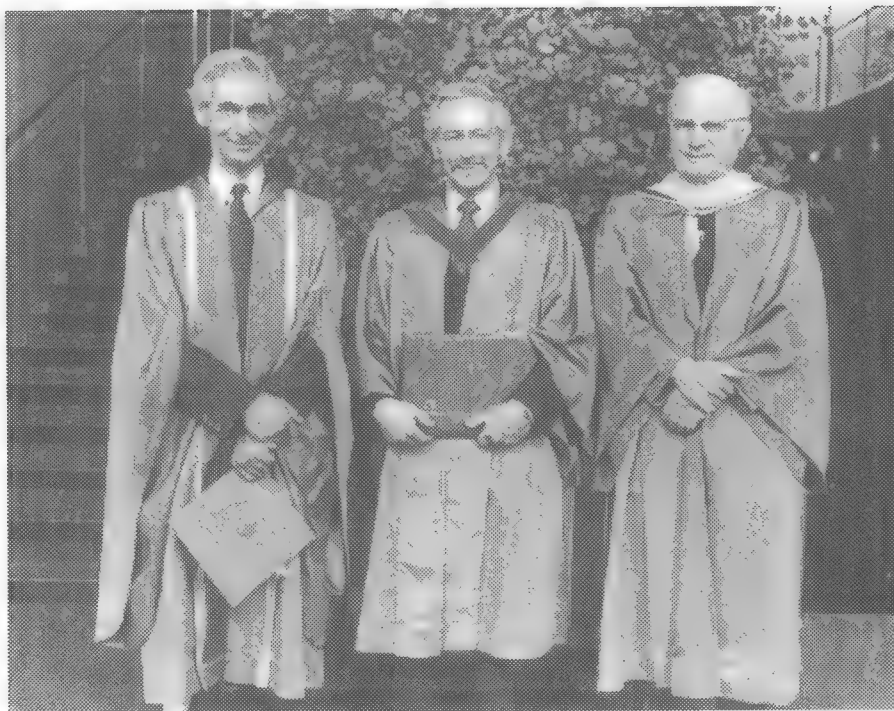
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Construction of the facilities in Athabasca continued throughout 1983-84 with occupancy scheduled for the summer of 1984.



Athabasca University's seventh convocation was held on June 9, 1984, at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton. This would be the University's last convocation to be held in Edmonton. Forty-two students were awarded degrees, twice as many as in the previous year.





Also in June 1984, Athabasca University's support staff joined the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE), becoming Local 69.

By December 1984, Athabasca University's central offices had been relocated to the Town of Athabasca, starting with the Facilities and Services department in May 1984, and ending with the Course Materials department in December. Truly, this achievement marked a milestone in Athabasca University's history—it is not often that an entire university is moved!

Reflecting on the years 1980 to 1985, President Griew noted in the 1984-85 Annual Report that, "In March 1981, course enrolments for the fiscal year stood at 5,613. Four years later, in March 1985, they totalled 12,387—a massive increase of 121 per cent over the 1981 total . . . In 1981, the university employed 80 professional and 80 support staff. Four years later, 106 professional staff and 116 support staff were on the payroll . . . The increase in the number of tutors employed more adequately reflects that enrolment increase—an increase of 225 per cent, from 84 in 1981, to 189 in 1985 . . ."



*AU Tutors*

Dr. Stephen Griew resigned as President. In April 1985, Dr. Terry Morrison was appointed Athabasca University's fourth President, commencing a five-year term in August 1985.



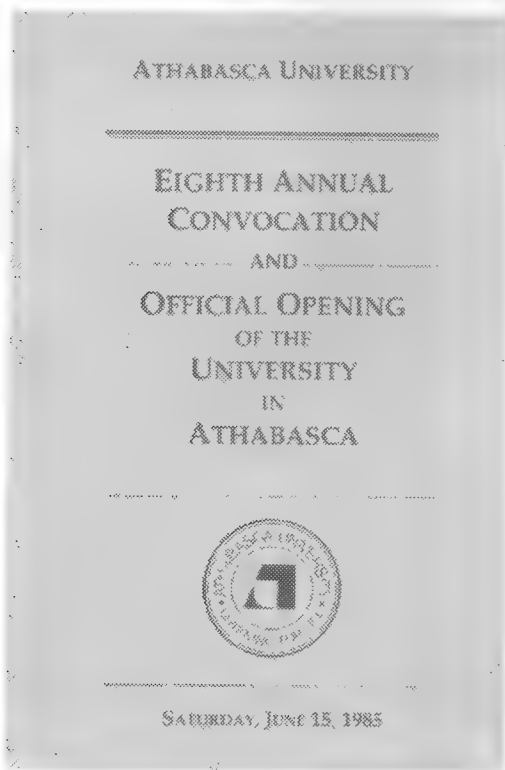
*Dr. T. Morrison*

In May 1985, the Governing Council adopted the following mission statement:

*Athabasca University is dedicated to the removal of barriers that traditionally restrict access to and success in university-level studies, and to increasing equality of educational opportunity for all adult Canadians regardless of their geographical location and prior academic credentials. In common with all universities, Athabasca University is committed to excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and to being of service to the general public.*

A long-term plan accompanied the mission statement.

On June 15, 1985, a gala official opening of Athabasca University's central offices took place in conjunction with the eighth annual convocation ceremony.













**D**URING THE LATE 1980s, Athabasca University's achievements included the following:

- establishment of the Centre for Distance Education on May 1, 1986.

## Chapter Six: 1986 to 1990



- in March 1987, under Alberta Order in Council 93/87, the Athabasca Regulation was amended to add a vice-president ex-officio member, an Athabasca University tutor representative, and two additional public members to Governing Council.
- Allan Bleiken was appointed Vice-President University Development.

- the Athabasca University Development Institute Ltd. (AUDI) was established in 1987 as a non-profit corporation to develop new initiatives and to raise funds for Athabasca University.
- establishment of two certificate programs: University Certificate in Administration and University Certificate in Public Administration.
- launching of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) project, “Rural Community Development in Northeast Thailand,” during the 1987-88 fiscal year.
- in May 1988, Governing Council adopted a four-year plan—the Strategic Academic Plan.
- received approval for the new Bachelor of Nursing degree (1989-90).



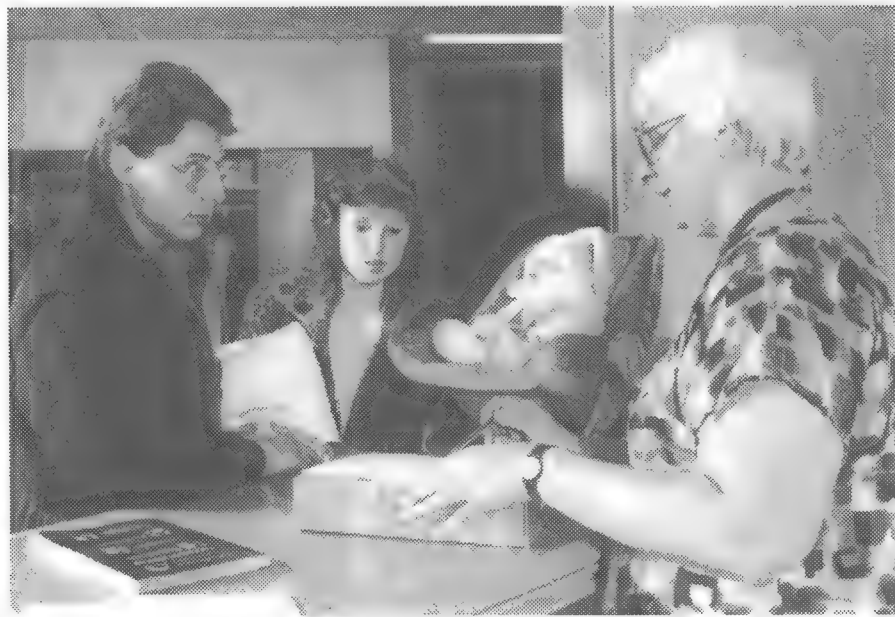


As of May 10, 1988, Athabasca University's tutors were officially represented by the Canadian Union of Educational Workers (CUEW), Local 11. As of April 19, 1995, they were represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).



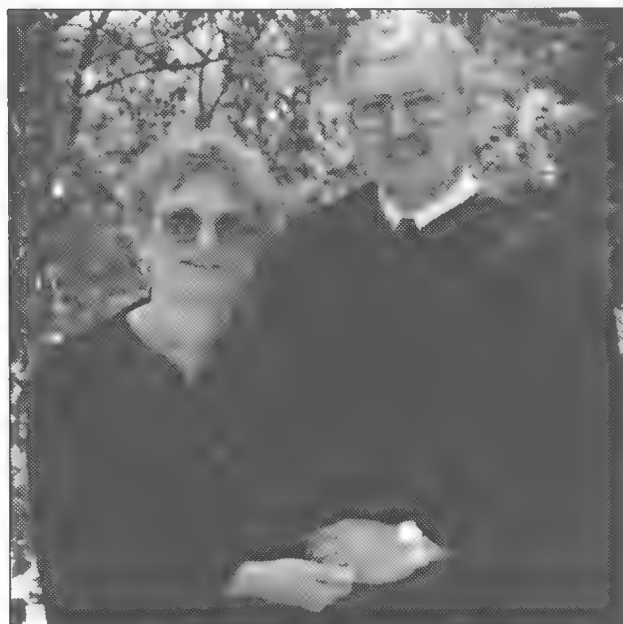


*Library Services*





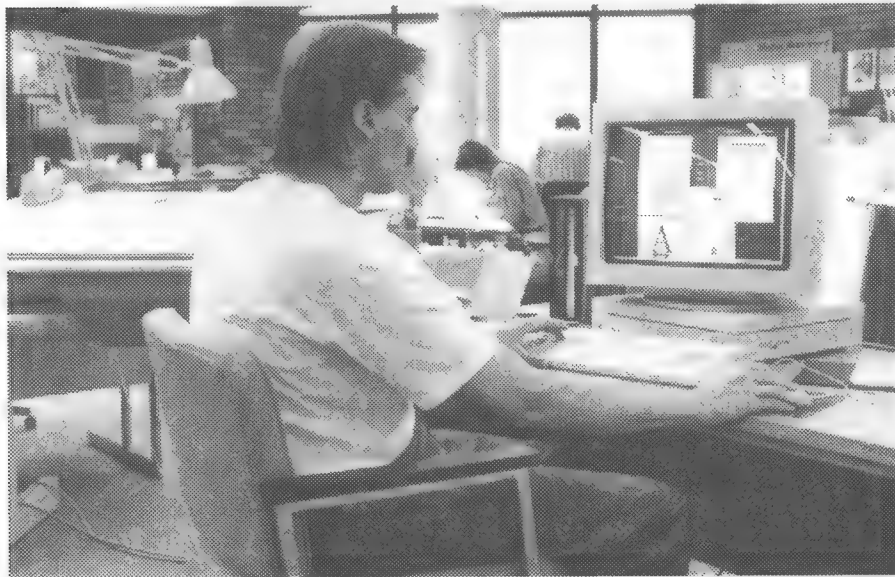




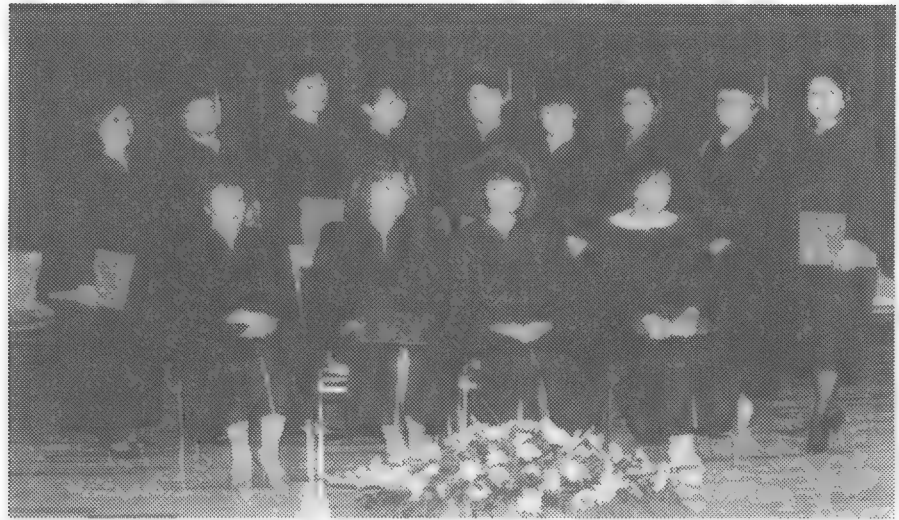


## Chapter Seven: *The 1990s*

**I**N THE 1990-91 Annual Report, President Terrence R. Morrison reported, “Driving the development of Athabasca University is the Strategic Academic Plan (SAP) adopted in 1988 and the Strategic Administrative and Financial Economic (SAFE) Plan, which was finalized in September 1990. The SAP is the major academic planning document for the university while the SAFE Plan ensures that the administrative and financial infrastructure to support the SAP is in place. When combined, these two documents constitute the university’s Institutional Plan . . . In addition, five other priorities to support the administrative operations of the university have been identified: to improve quality of service; to establish a fully electronic course development and production system; to develop a comprehensive plan for equipment acquisition and facility expansion; to determine and develop information systems technologies; and to implement effective policies and plan employee training opportunities.”



Three new degree programs were approved and offered: the Bachelor of Nursing, the Bachelor of Commerce, and the Bachelor of Science. Two new University Certificate programs were offered—Accounting and Labour Studies. The first students graduated with University Certificates in Health Development Administration.



Still another milestone for Athabasca University occurred when thirty-five students graduated from the joint Athabasca University-Ramkhamhaeng University (Thailand) program.

As of March 31, 1991, Athabasca University's staff totalled 144.1 professional staff, 125.5 support staff, and 272 tutorial staff.



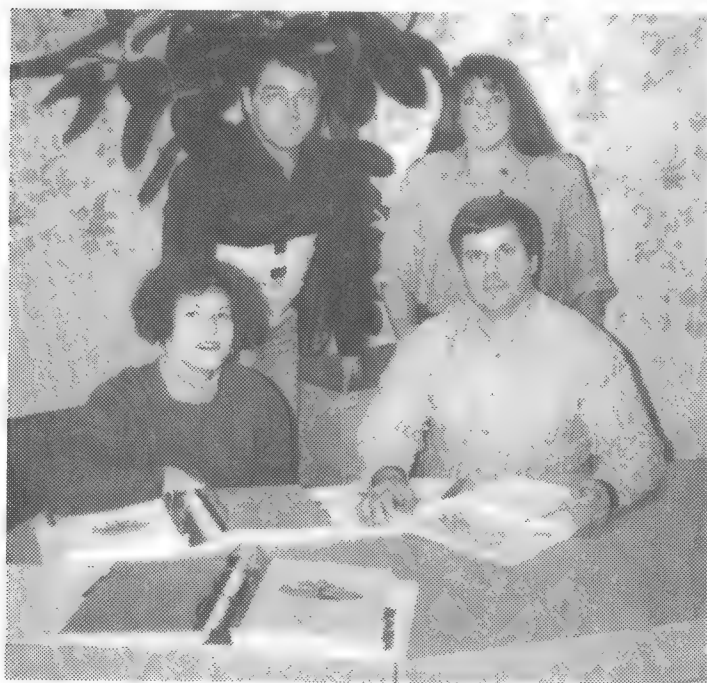
*AU Staff*

Students registered at Athabasca University numbered 11,591 in 1993-94 compared to 11,229 in 1990-91. Course registrations were 19,671 in 1993-94 compared to 17,242 in 1990-91. Numbers of

graduates continued to increase each year, more than doubling between 1989-90 and 1993-94, from 79 to 163.



In 1992, the Athabasca University Student Association (AUSA) was formed. The Association's executive were: Julie Callahan, President; John Scott, Vice-President Academic/Student Affairs; and Anne Collins, Vice-President Administration/Finance. The first AUSA executive meeting was held on October 17, 1992, in Red Deer, Alberta.



*Julie Callahan, John Scott, Anne Collins, Rick Leclerc (Executive Director)*

In May 1993, the Alberta Government approved Athabasca University's Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. The MBA program is administrated through the Centre for Innovative Management (CIM) with offices located in St. Albert. Dr. Stephen Murgatroyd and Dr. John Brousseau were appointed Executive Directors of CIM.



*AU Staff*

Athabasca University continues to make it possible for people to earn a university education regardless of where they live or work, or their commitments to families or careers. The University continues to deliver most (84 per cent) of its courses through the independent home-study mode, in which students receive a course package containing all the texts, study guides, manuals, and, if necessary, non-print materials they require to complete the course.

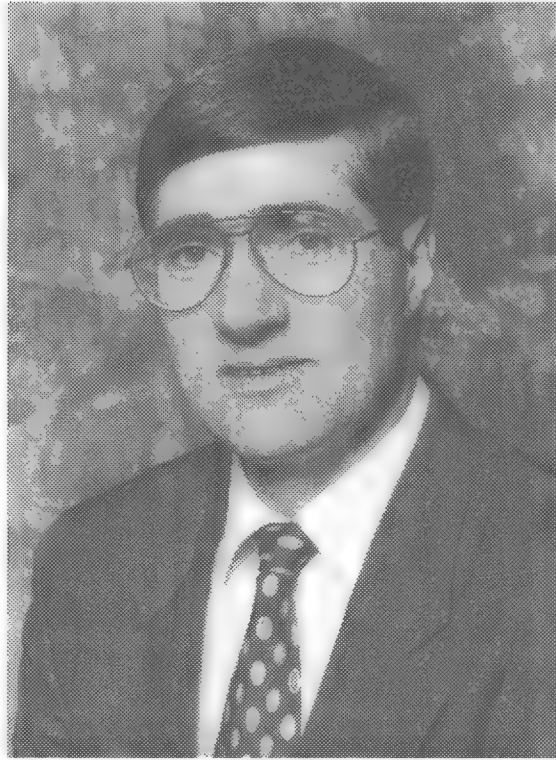


Students also have toll-free access to a telephone tutor. Thirteen per cent of Athabasca University courses are delivered through seminar study, in which students receive the course package but also attend weekly seminar sessions guided by a tutor. Less than three per cent of Athabasca University courses are taught through teleconferencing, computer managed learning, guided instruction, or are delivered by an instructor.



The 1995-96 course offerings include more than 350 credit courses, two Graduate programs, eleven Undergraduate Degrees, and ten University Certificates.

In 1994, Dr. Terry Morrison resigned as President. Dr. Dominique Abrioux was appointed Athabasca University's fifth President in January 1995. In his message in the 1995-96 *Calendar* Dr. Abrioux writes,



*Dr. Dominique Abrioux*

“Welcome to Athabasca University and to the opportunities and challenges of distance learning.

As we enter our 25th year of operation, we have recommitted ourselves to serving you, the student, by providing you with the best possible courses, services, and learning experiences. Our faculty and staff are here to assist you as you embark on your voyage of discovery and “Learning without Limits.”

At Athabasca University we are dedicated to “Learning for Life.” When you enrol in one of our programs we want to help you grow in knowledge and academic experiences. We also recognize that individuals have widely varying educational needs and goals. At Athabasca University, it doesn't matter whether you are twenty or eighty, whether you are enrolled in one of our programs or improving



your career opportunities, whether you are taking courses toward a program at another institution or association or simply taking courses out of personal interest. Whatever your goal, we want to help you achieve it.”



*Athabasca University Governing Council, 1995*

*Happy 25th Anniversary, Athabasca University!*

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Thomas A. Edge Archives—Clipping Files.

All the photographs, except for the photograph of the first Interim Governing Authority on page 2, are courtesy of the Media Services Fonds housed in the archives and the photograph files housed in Media Services. The photograph of the first Interim Governing Authority on page 2 is courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

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